

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 09318 191750Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2929

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 9318

EXDIS

FROM ENVOY WALTERS FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PORG, SZ, IT, VT
SUBJECT: THE HOLY SEE AND UNSSOD

REF: (A) STATE 122748; (B) ROME 8710

1. AT A LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI MAY 18, HE MADE A POINT TO PRIVATELY DISCUSS WITH ME AND MR. SARROS ONCE AGAIN WHAT HE CHARACTERIZED AS THE TROUBLESOME PROBLEM RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF HIS DELIVERY OF A MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNSSOD. HE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS A SOURCE OF GREAT EMBARRASSMENT TO THE HOLY SEE SINCE THE EARLY COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY HIM FROM THE UN THROUGH THE HOLY SEE PERMANENT OBSERVER HAD CLEARLY INDICATED THAT THE MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS COULD BE DELIVERED BY CASAROLI TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT SOME POINT. THIS INFORMATION HAS HAD SOME INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION--APPARENTLY ALSO TO A VISITING HIGH-LEVEL RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT DELEGATION LEADED BY AMB. ISRAELAN. THUS, THE HOLY SEE FINDS ITSELF NOW IN A VERY AWKWARD POSITION. AS A RESULT, CASAROLI INDICATED THAT, WHILE HE WAS SYMPATHETIC AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE U.S. PROBLEMS, NEVERTHELESS, HE FOUND IT PUZZLING THAT A WAY COULD NOT

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BE FOUND FOR THE DELIVERY OF A MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS TO THE PLENARY SESSION OF SUCH A HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT FORUM AND ESPECIALLY SINCE CONTENT WOULD BE EVEN-HANDED AND NON-POLITIICAL EMPHASIZING THE MORAL ASPECTS OF DISARMAMENT. HE CITED THE PRECEDENT THAT POPE PAUL HAD BEEN INVITED AND DID DELIVER A MESSAGE IN 1965 TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SAID THAT ONLY HIS

POOR HEALTH RESTRICTS THAT POSSIBILITY AT THE PRESENT.

2. I MIGHT POINT OUT ALSO THAT THE BRITISH MINISTER TO THE HOLY SEE TOLD ME ON MAY 19 THAT CASAROLI HAD GIVEN A NEGATIVE REPLY TO A BRITISH-PORPOSED COMPROMISE UNDER WHICH CASAROLI WOULD BE ENABLED TO DELIVER THE POPE'S DESARMAMENT MESSAGE TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE WHOLE CONVENED ESPECIALLY FOR THIS PURPOSE IN THE HALL WHERE PLENARY SESSION IS HELD.

3. IN VIEW OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE HIS HOLINESS ATTACHES TO HAVING HIS MESSAGE DELIVERED TO THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE UNSSOD, I RECOMMEND THAT OUR POSITION (REFTEL A) BE RECONSIDERED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE DEPARTMENT EVEN IF SUCH RECONSIDERATION AFFIRMS OUR NEGATIVE POSITION. I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING IN A POSITION TO ASSURE CASAROLI THAT THE MATTER WAS CONSIDERED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE DEPARTMENT AND HAS NOT BEEN LIGHTLY TAKEN.
GARDNER

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